

Emergent Cultural Spark

Working from home revolution

Covid-19 has dramatically changed the way we work. We are in the midst of the largest work-from-home experiment – one which is likely to irrevocably change the nature of how we work.

In a world of the 3-second commute, some are valuing having more time to spend wisely to achieve more in their free time. For many, the ability to work uninterrupted is leading to greater levels of focus, productivity and job fulfilment. Even parents are (mostly) enjoying having more time with family and in the home. It has allowed them to become more mindful as parents and more involved in their family's daily lives.

With the experiment having worked pretty successfully, many are questioning the need to commute to an office 5 days a week.

However, working remotely has not come without challenges. The biggest challenges are for those who thrive on the workplace chatter, vibe and ability to engage in impromptu brainstorming around projects. They miss the water cooler conversations, face-to-face support and a physical environment that promotes connection, collaboration and creativity.

Having the right tech has also been an issue for employees working in companies who were ill-prepared to equip them with the necessary technological infrastructure to work from home. And those who are less tech-savvy had to get up to speed fast!

Blurred boundaries between work and personal time means working hours have been extended. For those working in the same space as they relax or sleep there is no transitional space to mark the end of a working day.

Parents especially are feeling the strain of trying to work while home schooling kids and looking after wayward toddlers. They talk of constant interruptions causing heightened stress and anxiety, with negative impacts on family dynamics and mental health, and they cannot wait to get back to the office.



Key Clues

The Project Factory has launched a new mobile app, Sound Bored. It's an app loaded with office sounds – from sighing to typing – to bring the feeling of interaction in home.

What we are hearing...

27%

are moderately / extremely concerned about their workplace expecting things to go back to normal straight away

"I am finding that I have so much more time for exercise and just getting out in the mornings before I start work"- Female Sydney 32.

31%

are moderately / extremely concerned about readjusting to new ways of working when restrictions are lifted

"Being able to bounce ideas off colleagues and just get energy from my workmates and feel connected in the things you're all working on together as a team.

I'm a people person and feed off others energy so for me it's really hard. I get along really well with my colleagues and boss and really miss them - Female 43 Newcastle

31%

are moderately / extremely concerned about having to commute again

"It's really nice to have the family so close by, being altogether, not having to rush outside the door in the mornings is nice"- Female 38 Melbourne



WHAT IT MEANS LOOKING AHEAD

The prolonged period of working remotely is giving rise to **greater expectations of flexible work arrangements** in the future.

Employees are likely to place greater value on employers who demonstrate trust and support remote working. They will also be more prepared to call out 'clock watching' employers where productivity is measured by time spent in an office and the need to be physically seen working.

The crisis has been the impetus for massive digital transformation for many companies, and employees are likely to be more demanding in their need for digital and other essential tools to do the job. It will likely be expected that employers will fund the essentials, including picking up the bill for anything from desks and ergonomic chairs to WIFI. What constitutes a good company perk is likely to change.

This shift is likely to be beneficial to parents who feel guilty having to rush off to pick up kids even though they are making up work after hours.

As employees realise the benefits of working remotely, they are likely to move further afield to take advantage of cheaper house prices. And more employers will question the value of paying expensive rent on offices in central locations, opting for reduced office spaces in more affordable areas.

The nature of the office may be transformed from open plan desks for all to hot desking – **reimagining the office space as a social hub built for creativity, connection, comfort and collaboration. It may be a more experiential space designed for culture building and socialisation** while more of the the grunt work is done at home.

What we are hearing...

"I think the workplace focus will shift from making a physical appearance to being there and encourage employers to get better ways of managing their performance versus how many hours you're in the workplace"

– Female 39 Sydney



"100% people won't buy the myth you can't work from home, no employer can turn around with a straight face can say that now"

–Male 23 Melbourne

"I think it helps people who may have been resistant to the idea appreciate what can be achieved"

– Female 38 Melbourne